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# Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 TAIPEI 02895 01 OF 02 090926Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
----------049036 090932Z /16
P 090915Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7364

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 TAIPEI 02895

STADIS//////////////////////////////////////

EXDIS

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: MILI, TW, CH
SUBJECT: LETTER FROM ADMIRAL SOONG TO RADM LINDER ON PRC ACTIVITY IN TAIWAN STRAIT

REFS: (A) 77 TAIPEI 2937, (B) 77 STATE 142465, (C) 77 TAIPEI 3735, (D) 77 TAIPEI 4390

1. TDC HAS PASSED TO EMBASSY COPY OF AN APRIL 22, 1978 LETTER TO REAR ADMIRAL LINDER FROM ADMIRAL SOONG EXPRESSING GROC CONCERN OVER RECENT PRC FLIGHTS IN THE TAIWAN STRAIT. (TDC CABLED TEXT OF LETTER TO CINCPAC, WHICH PASSED IT TO JCS AND DIA.) MAIN POINTS OF LETTER ARE AS FOLLOWS:

BEGIN QUOTE. A. DURING THE PERIOD 1409 TO 1433 HOURS ON APRIL 13, L978 TWO FLIGHTS OF FOUR CHINCOM FIGHTER AIRCRAFT EACH LEFT PINGTAN AND ENTERED THE TAIWAN STRAIT...ONE FLIGHT...BEGAN RETURNING (TO THE MAINLAND) APPROXIMATELY 10 NAUTICAL MILES FROM THE CENTER LINE OF THE TAIWAN STRAIT...THE OTHER FLIGHT HEADED TOWARD (A POINT) 15 NAUTICAL MILES SOUTH OF TUNGYIN ISLAND.
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B. (FROM) 1351 TO 1446 HOURS ON APRIL 14, 1978 EIGHT CHICOM FIGHTER AIRCRAFT IN TWO FLIGHTS (SOUTH OF PINGTAN ISLAND) APPROACHED (ROC) AIRCRAFT AT A DISTANCE OF 15 NAUTICAL MILES WHILE (ROC) AIRCRAFT WERE ON ROUTINE PATROL MISSION...

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C. THIS DELIBERATE PROVOCATIVE ACT COMMITTED BY CHICOM FIGHTER AIRCRAFT CONSTITUTED A DIRECT THREAT TO THE SECURITY OF THE TAIWAN STRAIT. THIS TIME HAD THE ROCAF NOT EXERCISED STRICT SELF-RESTRAINT, AN AIR BATTLE MIGHT HAVE OTHERWISE OCCURRED. HOWEVER, SHOULD SUCH KIND OF INCIDENT BE ALLOWED TO PERSIST IN THE FUTURE, IT MIGHT POSSIBLY LEAD TO UNEXPECTED HOSTILITIES. IN CONSIDERATION OF OUR MUTUAL DEFENSE STANDING, I WISH TO BRING UP THIS INCIDENT FOR YOUR SERIOUS ATTENTION AND CONCERN. IN ADDITION, YOUR APPROPRIATE AND NECESSARY ACTIONS TAKEN IN THIS REGARD ARE ALSO SOLICITED. UNQUOTE.

(COMMENT: TDC HAS BEEN UNABLE TO CONFIRM THAT THE FLIGHTS DESCRIBED IN PARAGRAPH A. OF THIS LETTER EVER TOOK PLACE; THE FLIGHTS DESCRIBED IN PARAGRAPH B. PROBABLY DID TAKE PLACE.)

2. CINCPAC HAS ADVISED REAR ADMIRAL LINDER TO TELL SOONG OF OUR QUOTE CONFIDENCE IN ROC'S ABILITY TO CONTINUE THIS SAME LEVEL OF FLIGHT DISCIPLINE. UNQUOTE.

3. SOONG WROTE TWO SIMILAR LETTERS TO TDC VICE ADMIRAL SNYDER IN MAY AND JULY, 1977 (REFS A AND D) AND BOTH TDC AND EMBASSY REGARD THIS YEAR'S MESSAGE AS ROUTINE REITERATION OF STANDARD GROC POSITION ON



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STRAIT. NEITHER TDC NOR EMBASSY HAS REPLIED TO SOONG'S LETTER. WHILE WE HAVE NO OBJECTION TO RESPONSE PROPOSED BY CINCPAC, DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS OPPORTUNITY TO REITERATE U.S. POSITION PER REFS B AND C, THAT STRAIT IS INTERNATIONAL WATERWAY. LETTER FROM LINDER TO SOONG, BEGINNING "I HAVE BEEN INSTRUCTED TO RESPOND THAT" WOULD BE EFFECTIVE AND APPROPRIATE WAY TO REMIND THE GROC (PARTICULARLY THE MILITARY LEADERSHIP) THAT WE DO NOT ACCEPT THEIR VIEW OF THE STRAIT. FOLLOW-UP AT POLITICAL LEVEL SHOULD WAIT UNTIL WE DECIDE WHETHER WE INTEND TO TIE WEAPONS SALES TO CHANGES IN RULES OF ENGAGEMENT IN STRAIT.

4. FYI: THIS YEAR, ACCORDING TO ROC RADAR, THERE HAVE BEEN NINE PRCAF OVERFLIGHTS OF THE STRAIT. FURTHEST DISTANCE INTO STRAIT WAS 21 NAUTICAL MILES FROM PRC COAST. ALL OVERFLIGHTS THIS YEAR HAVE BEEN NEAR HAITAN ISLAND IN NORTHERN STRAIT AREA, WHERE PRC IS ATTEMPTING TO SALVAGE A SUNKEN JAPANESE SHIP, THE AWA MARU, WHICH MAY CONTAIN SUBSTANTIAL QUANTITIES OF GOLD.

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5. IN 1976 THERE WERE SEVEN PRCAF FLIGHTS OVER
THE STRAIT, MOST OCCURRING IN SOUTHERN STRAIT AREA;
FURTHEST PENETRATION WAS IN VICINITY OF 13
NAUTICAL MILES FROM MAINLAND. IN 1977 THERE WERE NINE
SUCH FLIGHTS, ALL IN NORTHERN STRAIT AREA;
FURTHEST PENETRATION WAS TO ROUGHLY 35-40 NM
FROM TAIWAN.

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
----------049042 090935Z /10
P 090915Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7365

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EXDIS

6. THERE WERE PRCAF OVERFLIGHTS DURING THE PRC JOINT
SERVICE EXERCISES IN 1976 AND 1977 WHICH TOOK PLACE
IN THE TUNG SHAN-NAN AO ISLANDS AREA IN THE SOUTHERN
PART OF STRAIT. IT IS TOO EARLY TO SPECULATE ABOUT
A FORTHCOMING JOINT SERVICE EXERCISE IN THE STRAIT THIS
YEAR. SULLIVAN

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